



The Urban District of Penrith

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

Medical Officer of Health

for the Year 1940

THE URBAN DISTRICT OF PENRITH
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YEAR 1940

Chairman of the Council:
Councillor I. G. SIM, J.P.

Chairman of the Health Committee:
Councillor J. L. RICHARDSON.

Medical Officer of Health:
F. W. GAVIN, M.D., Ch.B.(Edin)., D.P.H.(Edin).

Clerk of the Council:
C. H. HUNTLEY, F.I.M.T.A., F.S.A.A., A.C.I.S.

Town Hall,
P E N R I T H.

31st December, 1941.

To the Chairman and Councillors of the
Urban District of Penrith.

Mr. Chairman, Mrs Johnson and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit to you my Annual Report on the health of the town for the year 1940.

This report, which has been prepared in accordance with the Ministry of Health's circular 2314 of the 26th March, 1941, and on the lines indicated in Circular 2067 dated 19th July, 1940, is once more much curtailed owing to the urgent need for conserving paper.

The outbreak of TRICHINIASIS with some 60 cases and a case mortality of 3.3% which occurred in the early months of 1941 will be dealt with in the Annual Report for that year.

The vital statistics for the year are affected by the increase in population which is now estimated by the Registrar General to be 10,630.

Details of these statistics will be found in this report, and it will be noted that they are pretty much the same as in 1939.

A localised outbreak of Flexner's Dysentery (Flexner Z) caused the death of a girl aged 3 years, and illness of varying severity in four other persons; unfortunately the origin of this infection could not be ascertained.

Epidemics of Measles and Whooping Cough occurred and Measles with a case rate of 10.53 per 1,000 of the population compared with 10.24 for England and Wales.

Whooping Cough had a case rate of 10.25 per 1,000 of the population comparing with 1.34 for England and Wales. There was one death from this disease in Penrith.

In conclusion I wish to express my thanks for the courtesy and help extended to me by the Chairman of the Council, the Chairmen of the Sanitary and Housing Committees and Mr. C. H. Huntley, Clerk of the Council.

I have the honour to be,
Mr. Chairman, Mrs Johnson and Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,

F. W. GAVIN.

Medical Officer of Health.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area of the District in acres.	.. .. .	7,586
Registrar General's estimate of population	..	10,630
Number of inhabited houses, according to Rate Books	.. .. .	2,722
Rateable value	.. .. .	£63,397
Sum represented by a Penny Rate.	.. .. .	£257. 3. 10d.

The social conditions of the town are similar to those noted in previous reports.

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UNEMPLOYMENT.

The following figures have been kindly supplied by the Officer in Charge of the Penrith Labour Exchange.

<u>31st December 1940.</u>		<u>31st December 1940.</u>	
Men	16	Women	17
Young men.	Nil	Young women.	Nil
Boys 16-17	1	Girls 16-17	13
Boys 14-15	<u>4</u>	Girls 14-15	<u>2</u>
	<u>21</u>		<u>32</u>

There are no forms of employment carried on in the Urban District which have a detrimental effect on the health of the inhabitants.

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EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR.

			<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Live Births - legitimate.	75	82	157
illegitimate.	..	..	6	4	10
Birth Rate per 1,000 of population = 15.71					
Still births - legitimate.	..	..	4	4	8
illegitimate.	..	..	1	-	1
Rate per 1,000 (total live and still births) = 47.87					
Still births, rate per 1,000 of population for Penrith urban area.					= 0.84
Still births, rate per 1,000 of population for England and Wales.					= 0.55

			<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Deaths.	..	..	66	75	141
Death rate per 1,000 of population = 13.26					
Deaths from Puerperal causes - puerperal sepsis -					Nil.
Deaths from other maternal causes.				-	2
Other maternal causes rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births -	..	..	..	..	10.63
Death rate of infants under one year:					
All infants per 1,000 live births	..	..	..	..	72.62
Legitimate infants per 1,000 live births	..	..	..	..	67.03
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	..	..	..	..	100.00
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	..	..	..	..	22
" " Measles (all ages)	..	..	..	..	Nil.
" " Whooping Cough (all ages)	..	..	..	..	1
" " Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	..	..	..	..	Nil.

COUNTY OF CUMBERLAND

VITAL STATISTICS - YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1940.

	Birth Rate.	Crude Death Rate.	Adjusted Death Rate.	Infantile Mortality Rate.
Administrative County of Cumberland.	15.6	15.2	14.8	73
Urban Districts of Cumberland (including Boroughs of Workington and Whitehaven).	16.4	13.0	16.3	75
Rural districts of Cumberland.	15.1	14.7	13.9	71
Penrith Urban District.	15.71	13.26	13.15	72.62
England and Wales.	14.6	14.3	-	55

W A T E R

The following is the bacteriological and chemical analysis of a sample of water taken from the Penrith supply:-

BACTERIOLOGY

<u>Agar plate count</u>	<u>0.1 ml. colonies</u>	<u>1 ml. colonies</u>	<u>10 ml. colonies</u>
At 22° C.	-	4	47
At 37° C.	-	1	13

Probable number of coli-aerogenes present in 100 ml. = Nil.

CHEMISTRY

Appearance in a 2 ft. tube - Clear and colourless.

pl. - 7.1

						Parts per 100,000
Free and saline ammonia	..	..	..	..	..	0.0002
Albuminoid ammonia	..	..	..	..	..	0.0032
Oxygen absorbed from permanganate in 15 mins. at 27° C.	..	..	..	..	..	0.008
Oxygen absorbed from permanganate in 4 hours at 27° C.	..	..	..	..	..	0.012
Total solids	..	..	..	..	..	3.1
Suspended matter	..	..	..	..	..	0.0
Hariness - total	..	..	..	..	..	2.2
" permanent	..	..	..	..	..	1.9
" temporary	..	..	..	..	..	0.3
Chlorine present as chlorides	..	..	..	..	..	0.55
Heavy metals	..	..	..	..	..	0.0

Opinion: A rather soft water of very high purity.

(Signed) LESLIE H. EASSON.

Chemist.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(A) - MILK SUPPLY.

Analysis of Milk Samples taken during 1940.

<u>Grade of Milk.</u>	<u>Satisfactory.</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
T.T.	4	3	7
Accredited.	6	4	10
Ungraded.	16	6	22
	<u>26</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>39</u>

The above samples were taken mainly during the period April to July inclusive.

MILK IN SCHOOLS.

Tuberculin Tested (Certified) Milk is supplied to all the Elementary Schools in the town and also to the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School under the 'Milk in Schools' Scheme of the Milk Marketing Board.

This supply was satisfactory.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(B) - MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.

Carcases Inspected and Conderned.

	Beasts	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed.	1,792	114	131	12,449	1,420
Number inspected.	1,792	114	131	12,449	1,420
All diseases except Tuberculosis:					
Whole carcasses condemned.	11	3	13	68	5
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned.	429	5	3	150	15
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis.	24.55%	7.01%	12.21%	1.75%	1.40%
Tuberculosis only:					
Whole carcasses condemned.	15	3	-	-	3
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned.	14	2	-	-	57
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis.	1.06%	4.38%	Nil	Nil	4.22%

CARCASES EXAMINED BY THE VETERINARY SURGEON.

PENRITH MUNICIPAL SLAUGHTERHOUSE.

	Beasts	Cows	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Calves
1st quarter.	362	-	1,551	354	25
April.	152	4	370	145	6
May.	113	12	330	137	6
June.	89	9	642	84	5
July.	111	16	1,386	148	11
August.	145	8	1,444	97	14
September.	215	9	1,617	132	8
October.	264	22	1,458	96	11
November.	160	16	1,458	73	21
December.	148	18	1,567	146	22
Yearly total.	1,759	114	11,823	1,412	129

PENRITH CO-OPERATIVE SLAUGHTERHOUSE.

	Beasts	Cows	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Calves
1st qtr (January)	33	-	60	6	-
Yearly total.	33	-	60	6	-

FRENCHFIELD SLAUGHTERHOUSE.

	Beasts	Cows	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Calves
1st qtr (January)	-	-	566	2	2
Yearly total.	-	-	566	2	2

PENRITH'S MUNICIPAL ABATTOIR. It will be seen from the above figures that all local slaughtering was concentrated in the Municipal Abattoir after January 1940 and that slaughtering then ceased at Frenchfield and Penrith Co-operative Slaughterhouses. The Abattoir has continued to function in a very satisfactory manner.

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS
AND OTHER DISEASES.

GENERAL: Infectious Diseases were less prevalent during 1940 than in either 1939 or 1938. It must be remembered that Measles and Whooping Cough only became notifiable on 1st November, 1939, and both these diseases easily headed the list of notifications for 1940.

A summary of the Notifiable Diseases (excluding Tuberculosis) will be found on Page 15.

SCARLET FEVER: Only 14 cases of this disease were recorded in 1940 as against 30 cases in each of the two preceding years, and 12 of the cases were in the months of January - May inclusive, the other two cases occurred in October.

Scarlet Fever was at no time epidemic during the year and the cases were of the usual mild type experienced during recent years.

Eleven cases were admitted to the isolation hospital and there were no deaths, 3 cases were evacuees, 2 boys of the Royal Grammar School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and one master from that school.

There was no school spread of infection and in no case could milk or other foodstuffs be blamed.

DIPHTHERIA: Four cases were notified, all were admitted to the isolation hospital and all recovered. The details of these cases are as follows:-

- (i) Occurring on 7/2/1940. Male aged 3½ years - not immunised.
- (ii) Occurring on 14/5/1940. Male aged 8 years. Attends Penrith Boys' National School - not immunised.
- (iii) Occurring on 8/8/1940. Male aged 8 years. Attends Penrith Boys' National School - immunised. This was definitely not a case of clinical diphtheria and was simply a case of ordinary tonsillitis with a positive swab. The boy was detained in hospital until negative swabs from the nose and throat had been obtained.
- (iv) Occurring on 7/12/1940. Female aged 25 years - not immunised.

The above record is most satisfactory and demonstrates the value of preventive inoculation against this extremely dangerous and treacherous disease.

DIPHTHERIA (continued).

The figures during the past seven years are as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Diphtheria Cases</u>	<u>Deaths</u>
1934	23	Nil.
1935	33	2
1936	23	1
1937	19	Nil.
1938	19	1
1939	10	Nil.
1940	4	Nil.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION: A total of 193 school-children and 2 pre-school age children received a course of 3 inoculations with T.A.F during the year.

The percentage of school-children rose above 90 percent at certain schools in the town - most of the inoculations having been carried out during the years 1937-1939 inclusive.

MEASLES: The epidemic which had commenced in the town in December, 1939, continued during the months of January and February, 1940, when 31 and 24 cases were notified respectively.

Only 1 case occurred in March, none in April, but the disease re-commenced in May and continued during June, July and August when it practically ceased, just 4 cases were recorded within the last quarter of the year.

Forty-five percent of all the cases were in pre-school age children and of the school-children affected the infants' schools were mainly concerned. No cases were admitted to hospital and there were no deaths.

WHOOPING COUGH: During the first nine months of 1940 only 4 cases were notified one each in July and September and 2 in August. 8 cases in October foreshadowed an epidemic in November and December with 57 and 40 cases respectively.

Sixty-nine percent of all cases were in pre-school age children and the other cases concerned the infants' schools which were closed from the 18th November until the 16th December for this reason.

One death was unfortunately recorded, a female evacuated child aged 1 year 8 months who had recently come to Penrith from Woolwich, London.

PNEUMONIA (Primary or Influenzal).

Twenty-three cases were notified during 1940 with 4 deaths (23 cases with 6 deaths in 1939). 8 cases occurred in November; 4 in February; 3 in June and 2 in each of the months January, March and December. There were no cases in the period August to October inclusive. The notification rate per 1,000 civilian population for 1940 was 2.16 compared with 1.20 for England and Wales 1940.

CEREBRO-SPINAL FEVER: Two notifications were received in 1940.

- (a) Male aged 31 years, on 12th March 1940, admitted to Carlisle City Isolation Hospital and discharged recovered on 9th April 1940.
- (b) Female aged 30 years, on 19th March 1940 admitted to Carlisle City Isolation Hospital and discharged recovered on 12th April 1940. This person belonged to Keswick but was temporarily living in Penrith.

There was no apparent infectious link between these cases and in this connection it must be recalled that infection is usually from an intermediary carrier in this disease.

It will be noted that these cases were admitted to the City of Carlisle Isolation Hospital in accordance with recommendations arrived at during a conference held at Maryport on 4/4/1940 to discuss inter alia a possible epidemic of this disease in Cumberland. This conference held by direction of the Ministry of Health was summoned by Dr. Kenneth Fraser, County Medical Officer of Health for Cumberland, and the local representatives were Dr. J. Sachs, Medical Superintendent, Penrith Fever Hospital and Dr. F. W. Gavin, Medical Officer of Health for Penrith urban and rural districts.

The conference recommended the division of the County for this purpose into two parts - east and west - the isolation hospitals in each area to pool their resources. In East Cumberland (the area including Penrith and Keswick) it was recommended that, in the event of a severe outbreak of cerebro-spinal fever, cases of that disease be sent to the Carlisle City Hospital; Penrith Isolation Hospital providing accommodation for diphtheria and Longtown for Scarlet fever.

BACILLARY DYSENTERY (Flexner). Five cases of this disease were notified on the 15th August - one of these posthumously - a girl aged 3 years who died at the Cumberland Infirmary, Carlisle, shortly after admission on the 11th August. All these cases

occurred in the same household and the history is as follows:- On the 8th of August two members of the family were taken ill with diarrhoea etc., and on the 10th August two further members of the family were also seized with similar symptoms. On the 11th August, the householder's son-in-law came to Penrith on leave from Workington barracks and he developed diarrhoea etc., but of a milder nature than the others, on the 13th August. Food poisoning being suspected, enquiries were made regarding made-up foods etc., which the family might have consumed, and it was elicited that potted meat had been purchased from a Penrith butcher on the 8th August. All of this was consumed on that date, each member of the family partaking of some of it and the potted meat was therefore considered to be suspect. The Surveyor and I immediately visited the butcher's shop concerned and we were informed that this potted meat is prepared from frozen pigs heads and beef by the butcher's wife daily and that a considerable quantity of it is sent to Grasmere for sale there. We obtained a sample of the potted meat and sent it to the pathologist at Carlisle for bacteriological examination.

In the meantime it was decided that two of the patients should be admitted to the fever hospital at Fairhill, and disinfection of the premises was done on August 16th.

No abnormal conditions were found at the butcher's shop and there were very few flies seen there. At the household concerned complaints were made of drain smells in the rear premises but the house itself was clean and no flies were observed. The Surveyor investigated the drain complaint in the yard.

As all the original potted meat sold on August 8th had been consumed long before the cases were notified it is impossible to prove that this food was responsible for the outbreak, and moreover, the fact that it had been localised to one family made it very difficult to ascertain where the actual infection had originated.

On 21st August, the pathologist 'phoned me to say that the sample of potted meat which we had sent for examination gave reactions of the Salmonella group (i.e. food poisoning) of organisms but that he could not agglutinate them with any of his sera, and that he had therefore sent cultures to the Ministry of Health. Report from the Ministry - "The organism does not belong to the Food Poisoning Group and, therefore, was not the cause of the illness in this family". In view of this report I immediately got into touch with the butcher who complained of the quality of the imported meat supplied to him from the Abattoir. I was so unfavourably impressed by the

appearance etc., of this meat in the refrigerator at the butcher's shop that I asked the Veterinary Officer to inspect this meat the same evening. He informed me that it was not condemnable as unfit for human consumption but he admitted its unattractiveness.

In order to eliminate a possible carrier condition infecting the meat I made arrangements for the butcher's wife to be specially examined by the pathologist and the results were entirely negative. I had the reports from the pathologist on three of the cases and these reports demonstrate that:-

(i) The soldier (who did not consume any potted meat) is entirely negative - his illness was very mild and transient.

(ii) Mrs X., who was admitted to Fairhill Isolation Hospital was positive to all the food poisoning group.

(iii) Mrs Y., was positive to both Gaertner and Aertrycke of the food poisoning group.

It may be that some other food source than potted meat was the cause of these cases; I cannot say.

Reports were immediately sent to the Medical Officers of Health for Grasmere and Workington owing to possible infection in their areas and also reports were made to the County Medical Officer and the Ministry of Health.

C A N C E R

Twenty-two deaths were caused by malignant disease, giving a death rate of 2.06 per 1,000 of the population; in 1939 there were 20 deaths and a rate of 2.06 per 1,000. On analysis the following data is found:-

<u>System</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
<u>Alimentary.</u>		
Stomach.	1	2
Pancreas	-	2
Colon	1	2
Powel	1	1
Rectum	1	1
Oesophagus	1	-
<u>Respiratory.</u>		
Lung.	1	-
<u>Osseous.</u>		
Primary Sarcoma Spine	-	1
<u>Glandular.</u>		
Thyreoid	-	1
Liver	2	2
<u>Reproductive.</u>		
Vaginal	-	1
Uterus	-	1
Totals.	8	14

1	of the deaths occurred among persons aged between 35 and 40
1	" " " " " " " " " " 40 and 45
1	" " " " " " " " " " 45 and 50
4	" " " " " " " " " " 60 and 65
2	" " " " " " " " " " 65 and 70
6	" " " " " " " " " " 70 and 75
7	" " " " " " " " " " 75 and over

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Cancer is a problem of the first magnitude and is undoubtedly one of the most urgent questions before the medical profession at the present time.

It is vital for treatment to be given early and to be thorough, and in this connection the importance for a patient to consult his own family doctor at the earliest stages of this disease cannot be over-emphasized.

Fortunately the deaths mostly occurred over 60 years of age, i.e. 86% of the total.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Diseases.	-1	1-	2-	3-	4-	5-	10-	15-	20-	35-	45-	65-	Total.	Admitted to Hospital.	Deaths	Notes
Smallpox.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Scarlet fever.	..	..	..	..	..	8	2	2	1	1	..	..	14	11	Nil	
Diphtheria.	..	..	..	1	..	2	..	..	1	..	..	..	4	4	Nil	
Enteric Fever (inc. Paratyphoid).	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Puerperal Pyrexia.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	Nil	
Primary Pneumonia.	2	..	2	2	2	4	..	1	1	2	6	1	23	..	4	
Erysipelas.	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	2	1	2	7	..	Nil	
Ophthalmia neonatorum.	6	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6	..	Nil	City of Carlisle Isol. Hospital
Cerebro-spinal fever.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	2	2	Nil	
Acute anterior poliomyelitis.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
* Measles.	5	4	16	14	12	43	6	6	6	..	..	..	112	..	Nil	
* Whooping Cough.	12	18	9	20	17	30	1	..	1	1	..	..	109	..	1	Died at C'land Infirmary.
Dysentery (Flexner).	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	1	1	..	..	5	2	1	
TOTALS.													283	19	6	

* Notifiable from November, 1939.

T U B E R C U L O S I S

No action has been necessary in respect to Tuberculosis among persons employed in the milk trade or under Section 172 of the Public Health Act, 1936, relating to the compulsory removal to hospital of persons suffering from Tuberculosis.

The following table gives particulars of the cases notified and the deaths from this disease.

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0-1								
1-5								
5-15								
15-25	1	1	1					
25-35	2	-	-	1	1			
35-45								
45-55	1					1		
55-65					1			
65 and upwards								
TOTALS.	4	1	1	1	2	1	-	-

The number of cases on the Tuberculosis Register at the end of the year were:

	Males	Females	Total
Pulmonary.	16	17	33
Non-Pulmonary.	7	7	14

One of the seven cases notified was temporarily domiciled in Penrith and she left the district for her home in Cocker-mouth urban district in May, 1940.

One of the three deaths which occurred was a casual inmate at the Penrith Public Assistance Institution.

The notification of cases occurring within the area is efficient and it will be noted with satisfaction that the Death Rate for 1940 at 0.2 compares favourably for the corresponding rates for 1939 at 0.5; 1938 at 0.7; and 1937 at 0.9, a progressive diminution.

CAUSES OF DEATH AS GIVEN BY THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL.

<u>Disease</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Whooping Cough	-	1	1
Tuberculosis of respiratory system ..	1	1	2
Other forms of Tuberculosis	-	-	-
Syphilitic diseases	1	-	1
Cancer of buccal cavity and oesophagus	1	-	1
Cancer of uterus	-	1	1
Cancer of stomach and duodenum . ..	1	2	3
Cancer of breast	-	-	-
Cancer of all other sites	5	12	17
Diabetes	1	-	1
Intracranial vascular lesions	6	17	23
Heart disease	16	18	34
Other disease of circulatory system .	4	1	5
Bronchitis	5	5	10
Pneumonia	2	1	3
Other respiratory diseases.	1	-	1
Ulcer of stomach or duodenum	1	1	2
Diarrhoea under 2 years	-	-	-
Appendicitis	-	-	-
Other digestive diseases	2	1	3
Nephritis	-	1	1
Puerperal and post-abortion sepsis ..	-	-	-
Other maternal causes	-	2	2
Premature birth	-	3	3
Congenital malformation; birth injury; infant diseases	4	-	4
Suicide	1	-	1
Road traffic accidents	1	1	2
Other violent causes	4	2	6
All other causes	9	5	14
Totals	66	75	141

